

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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12

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CU-04 HEW-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 AID-20

PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSR-01 /138 W

----- 077856

R 131501 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3735

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0414

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, BY, US

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH MINISTER OF EDUCATION ON U. S. -
BURUNDI RELATIONS

SUMMARY, MIN OF EDUCATION SEEKS US ASSISTANCE IN FIELD
TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN APPARENT EFFORT TO TEST US BURUNDI
POLICY AND FURTHER SIGNAL GRB INTEREST IN IMPROVING RELATIONS .
END SUMMARY

1. AMBASSADOR HAS RECENTLY BEEN APPROACHED SEPARATELY AND
INFORMALLY
BY SEVERAL GRB OFFICIALS, INDICATING THEIR INTEREST IN
RECEIVING A CALL FROM HIM. AS RESULT, EMBASSY ON APRIL 3
AGAIN REQUESTED APPOINTMENTS FOR AMBASSADOR WITH MEMBERS GRB
CABINET. FIRST RESULT THIS REQUEST WAS APPOINTMENT FOR
MEETING ON APRIL 12 WITH MINISTER OF EDUCATION GILLES
BIMAZUBUTE, ONE OF THOSE WHO HAD APPROACHED AMBASSADOR EARLIER.

2. BIMAZUBUTE HAS IN PAST BEEN CONSIDERED OUTSTANDING
REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUNG, EDUCATED TUTSI RADICAL GROUP.
(SEE BUJUMBURA A-72, MAY 17, 1971, AND OTHER BIO
MATERIAL.) HIS STATURE APPEARS TO HAVE GROWN SOMEWHAT
WITH HIS ACCESSION TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, WHERE
HE HAD EARLIER SERVED AS DIRECTOR GENERAL. FOREIGN
REPRESENTATIVES WHO HAVE DEALT WITH HIM RECENTLY HAVE
FOUND HIM REASONABLE, IF TOUGH, MAN TO DEAL WITH.
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WOULD APPEAR TO BE CONSIDERABLE DEVELOPMENT SINCE EARLY 1971, WHEN BELGIAN AMBASSADOR IS REPORTED TO HAVE DESCRIBED BIMAZUBUTE AS "ANTI- WHITE, ANTI- AMERICAN, AND ANTI- BELGIAN."

3. MINISTER' S PURPOSE SEEMED TO BE TO FEEL OUT US READINESS TO PROVIDE LIMITED ASSISTANCE IN EDUCATION FIELD IN BURUNDI. HE SAID THAT GRB WAS SEEKING NEW WAYS TO STRENGTHEN TECHNICAL EDUCATION (MECHANICS, ELECTRONICS, ETC.) AND WOULD BE INTERESTED IN US ASSISTANCE AS THEIR PLANS FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM DEVELOPED. AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED PRESENT US POLICY AS SET FORTH TO BURUNDI AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON LAST OCTOBER. IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR' S QUESTION, BIMAZUBUTE SAID HE WAS COMPLETELY AWARE OF THIS LINE OF POLICY. HE WANTED TO MAKE IT PLAIN, HOWEVER, THAT GRB WAS NOT ANTI- US AND THAT IT IN FACT SOUGHT GOOD RELATIONS WITH US. GRB COULD WELL UNDERSTAND US ATTITUDE AND RECOGNIZED UTILITY OF CONVINCING US OF SINCERITY GRB' S DESIRE SEEK NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. HE WAS ASSURED THAT THIS WOULD BE MOST USEFUL AND THAT WASHINGTON WOULD IN MEANTIME BE INFORMED OF MINISTER' S APPROACH.

4. IN RESPONSE TO MIN EDUCATION' S INTIMATION THAT US ATTITUDES TOWARDS BURUNDI MIGHT HAVE BEEN COLORED BY REQUESTED WITHDRAWAL OF US AMBASSADOR IN 1966, AMBASSADOR INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT FEEL THIS ELEMENT HAD PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN FORMULATION MORE RECENT US POLICY WHICH LARGELY AFFECTED BY REACTIONS TO 1972 EVENTS.

5. COMMENT: BUMAZUBUTE IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED TO BE A MEMBER OF INNER COUNCILS OF GRB. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT HIS SUBSTANTIVE INTEREST IN AND NEED FOR US ASSISTANCE MAY HAVE LED TO HIS BEING CHOSEN TO TEST FLEXIBILITY OF UNITED STATES' S BURUNDI POLICY. EMBASSY BELIEVES WE MAY HAVE ANOTHER FEELER AS BURUNDI' S EDUCATION REFORM EFFORTS-- STILL IN INITIAL STATES-- DEVELOP. THIS COULD BE TWO OR THREE MONTHS. IN MEANTIME, BIZAMUBUTE' S APPROACH FITS OTHER INDICATIONS THAT GRB SEARCHING FOR MEANS IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH US (BUJUMBURA A-31) WHILE AT SAME TIME EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES OF ASSISTANCE IN OTHER DIRECTIONS (BUJUMBURA 391 AND 402).
YOST

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